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AMBASSADE DE FRANCE
SERVICE DE PRESSE ET D'INFORMATION

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MOROCCAN AFFAIRS - NO. 12

March 1956

DOCUMENTARY BACKGROUND

ON THE FRANCO-MOROCCAN AGREEMENTS OF MARCH 2, 1956

On March 2, 1956, at the close of the Franco-Moroccan negotiations which had opened in Paris on February 15, a Joint Declaration solemnly recognizing the independence of Morocco was signed by the delegations of both countries. This Declaration laid down the principle of a Franco-Moroccan interdependence, freely negotiated and defined between sovereign States in the fields of defense, foreign policy and economic and cultural relations, and guaranteeing the rights and freedoms of French residents in Morocco and Moroccan residents in France.

An annexed Protocol to the Joint Declaration defines the situation of the Moroccan Government and its new relations with France during the transitional period when the modalities of interdependence between the two countries are to be negotiated.

The French Parliament will be called upon to ratify simultaneously the agreements resulting from the Joint Declaration of March 2 and the new conventions of interdependence between the two countries, which will provide for the formal abrogation of the Protectorate Treaty (Treaty of Fez, 1912).

OFFICIAL TEXTS

JOINT DECLARATION

"The Government of the French Republic and His Majesty Mohammed V, Sultan of Morocco, hereby solemnly state their determination to make fully operative the Declaration of La Celle-Saint-Cloud of November 6, 1955.

"They note that, in view of Morocco's advance along the road to progress, the Treaty of Fez of March 30, 1912 is no longer consistent with the requirements of modern life and can no longer govern Franco-Moroccan relations.

Ambassade de France

"Consequently, the Government of the French Republic hereby solemnly confirms its recognition of the independence of Morocco--which implies in particular the right to a diplomacy and an army--as well as its determination to respect, and to see to it that others respect, the integrity of Moroccan territory, as guaranteed by international treaties.

"The Government of the French Republic and His Majesty Mohammed V, Sultan of Morocco, hereby declare that the purpose of the negotiations which have just opened in Paris between Morocco and France, as equal and sovereign States, is to conclude new agreements which will define the interdependence of the two countries in the fields where they have common interests, will thus organize their cooperation on a basis of liberty and equality, especially in matters of defense, foreign relations, economy and culture, and will guarantee the rights and liberties of French persons settled in Morocco and of Moroccans settled in France, with due respect for the sovereignty of the two States.

"The Government of the French Republic and His Majesty Mohammed V, Sultan of Morocco, hereby agree that, pending the entry into force of these agreements, the new relations between France and Morocco shall be founded on the provisions of the annexed Protocol to the present Declaration.

"Done at Paris, in two original copies, on March 2, 1956.

(Signed) Christian Pineau, Embarek Bekkai"

ANNEXED PROTOCOL

"I.-The legislative power shall be exercised as a sovereign right by His Majesty the Sultan. The representative of France shall be advised of draft dahirs and decrees: during the transitional period, he shall have the right to submit observations on these texts when they concern the interests of France, French nationals or foreigners.

"II.-His Majesty Mohammed V, Sultan of Morocco, shall have at his disposal a national army. France will render assistance to Morocco in the constitution of that army. The present status of the French army in Morocco shall remain unchanged, during the transitional period.

"III.-Those administrative powers which up until now have been reserved shall be transferred in a manner to be determined by common agreement.

"The Moroccan Government shall be represented, with a deliberative voice, on the Committee of the Franc Area, the central organ determining the monetary policy of the Franc Area as a whole.

"Furthermore, the guarantees enjoyed by French civil servants and Government employees serving in Morocco shall be continued.

"IV.-The representative of the French Republic in Morocco shall have the title of High Commissioner of France.

"Done at Paris, in two original copies, on March 2, 1956.

(Signed) Christian Pineau, Embarek Bekkai"

EXCHANGE OF LETTERS BETWEEN H.E. EMBAREK BEKKAI, PRESIDENT OF THE MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT, CHAIRMAN OF THE MOROCCAN DELEGATION, AND M. CHRISTIAN PINEAU, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, CHAIRMAN OF THE FRENCH DELEGATION (DATED MARCH 2, 1956)

A) Concerning Diplomacy

- Letter from Embarek Bekkai to Christian Pineau

"Mr. Chairman, Following the Joint Declaration and the Protocol dated today, I have the honor of informing you that the Moroccan Government requests the French Government to continue to assume responsibility for the conduct of Morocco's foreign relations as well as for the representation and protection of Moroccan nationals and interests abroad, pending agreement by the two Governments, at the request of the Moroccan Government, on new provisions applying to the transitional period.

"Please accept, Mr. Chairman, the assurance of my highest consideration."

- Letter from Christian Pineau to Embarek Bekkai

"Mr. Chairman, By a letter dated today, you have been pleased to bring the following to my attention:

"Following the Joint Declaration and the Protocol dated today, I have the honor of informing you that the Moroccan Government requests the French Government to continue to assume responsibility for the conduct of Morocco's foreign relations as well as for the representation and protection of Moroccan nationals and interests abroad, pending agreement by the two Governments, at the request of the Moroccan Government, on new provisions applying to the transitional period.'

"I have the honor of confirming to you that the French Government accedes to this request.

"Please accept, Mr. Chairman, the assurance of my highest consideration."

B) Concerning the Implementation of Article II of the Protocol

- Letter from Christian Pineau to Embarek Bekkai

"Mr. Chairman, I have the honor of proposing to you that a Commission consisting of representatives of the Moroccan Government and of the French Government should meet on March 12, 1956, either in Rabat or in Paris, in order to ensure the implementation of Article II of the Protocol of March 2, 1956.

"Please accept, Mr. Chairman, the assurance of my highest consideration."

- Letter from Embarek Bekkai to Christian Pineau

"Mr. Chairman, By a letter dated today, you have been pleased to bring the following to my attention:

"'I have the honor of proposing to you that a Commission consisting of representatives of the Moroccan Government and of the French Government should meet on March 12, 1956, either in Rabat or in Paris, in order to ensure the implementation of Article II of the Protocol of March 2, 1956.'

"I have the honor of confirming to you that the Moroccan Government accepts this proposal.

"Please accept, Mr. Chairman, the assurance of my highest consideration."

C) Concerning Monetary and Financial Matters

- Letter from Embarek Bekkai to Christian Pineau

"Mr. Chairman, I wish to confirm to you that the Moroccan Government agrees, in the monetary and financial fields, not to make any change in the present system, pending a definition of the new modalities of cooperation between our two countries in those fields, in accordance with the Joint Declaration and the Protocol dated today.

"Please accept, Mr. Chairman, the assurance of my highest consideration."

- Letter from Christian Pineau to Embarek Bekkai

"Mr. Chairman, By a letter dated today, you have been pleased to bring the following to my attention:

"'I wish to confirm to you that the Moroccan Government agrees, in the monetary and financial fields, not to make any change in the present system, pending a definition of the new modalities of cooperation between our two countries in those fields, in accordance with the Joint Declaration and the Protocol dated today.

"I have the honor of confirming to you that the French Government agrees to the preceding provisions.

"Please accept, Mr. Chairman, the assurance of my highest consideration."

D) Concerning the Transfer of Powers

- Letter from Embarek Bekkai to Christian Pineau

"Mr. Chairman, In pursuance of Article III of the Protocol of March 2, 1956, I have the honor of proposing to you that a Commission consisting of French and Moroccan representatives should meet on March 10, 1956, in Rabat, to consider the question of the transfer of those administrative powers which up until now have been reserved, with the exception of monetary, financial, military and diplomatic problems, to be dealt with either in Rabat or in Paris.

"Please accept, Mr. Chairman, the assurance of my highest consideration."

- Letter from Christian Pineau to Embarek Bekkai

"Mr. Chairman, By a letter dated today, you have been pleased to communicate to me the following:

"'In pursuance of Article III of the Protocol of March 2, 1956, I have the honor of proposing to you that a Commission consisting of French and Moroccan representatives should meet on March 10, 1956, in Rabat, to consider the question of the transfer of those administrative powers which up until now have been reserved, with the exception of monetary, financial, military and diplomatic problems, to be dealt with either in Rabat or in Paris.'

"I have the honor of informing you that the French Government agrees to the preceding provisions.

"Please accept, Mr. Chairman, the assurance of my highest consideration."

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY M. CHRISTIAN PINEAU, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

"The French Government intends, in accordance with French constitutional rules, to submit, in due course, to the Parliament for ratification the whole series of agreements resulting from the present Declaration and of the conventions which will result from the current conversations pertaining to the relations of interdependence between Morocco and France and to the guarantee of the rights and interests of the French residents in Morocco."

OFFICIAL STATEMENTS MADE DURING THE FRANCO-MOROCCAN NEGOTIATIONS
(February 15 to March 2, 1956)

Address Delivered by M. René Coty, President of the French Republic,
at the Formal Inauguration of the Negotiations (February 15, 1956)

“Sire,

“The presence of Your Majesty and that of the President of the French Republic together constitute a twofold and solemn affirmation. They loudly proclaim the historic importance of the negotiations that are about to open between Morocco and France, to enable Morocco to accede to the status of an independent State, united to France by the permanent ties of an interdependence freely accepted and defined. They also express the essential inspiration and the fundamental principle of the negotiations: the friendship of our two peoples.

“Friendship is a word that is sometimes misused. Franco-Moroccan friendship is a reality inscribed in both the history and geography of our two countries and proceeding primarily from a deep-seated harmony between the characters of two peoples, equally valiant, equally proud, equally noble. Even better than a reality, this friendship has been a fruition, an amazingly abundant fruition.

“To like means to help. The mutual help of Morocco and France has, in less than half a century, accomplished an unrivalled task, the originators and pioneers of which were your August Father, His Majesty Moulay Youssef, and that Moroccan by adoption who was also a prophet, Marshal Lyautey, whose ashes repose, according to his last wishes, under the guardianship of the people which he loved so much.

“Moroccans and Frenchmen, we would be ungrateful if we did not pay warm tribute to all the Moroccans who have served France, as well as to all the Frenchmen who have served Morocco. What Frenchman—what veteran especially—could forget all these heroes, who came to us from Sherifian soil, who offered up and often gave their lives on so many battlefields for the independence of France and for the liberty of all peoples? What Moroccan could misunderstand the breadth of the initiatives, the hardihood, the sacrifices of all sorts through which so many Frenchmen, soldiers and civilians, while defending and strengthening the Sherifian Empire, courageously and effectively cooperated in this prodigious transformation which is now turning Morocco into a great modern State, whose population has risen during this time, from 3 million to some 8 million inhabitants.

“This change has been so rapid up until now that some have had difficulty in keeping pace with its accelerated rhythm; it is no less evident that it is now time to derive full profit from this change by giving a new impetus to Franco-Moroccan cooperation through new institutional bases. Of this great renewal, Your Majesty desires to be the great artisan.

“France and Morocco will thus be lucky in that, at an unusually difficult time, a Sovereign should have shown the clearsightedness, the broadmindedness, the eminent wisdom of a real statesman. Your Majesty is surrounded by a team and an elite which bear eloquent testimony to a culture in which are united the finest and strongest traditions of Islam and of our Latin humanism.

“What more favorable auspices could be offered for the talks that are about to define the ties of solidarity and fraternity that must bring our two States together in a free association? Does this mean that the task of the negotiators will be simple and easy? To pretend this would be to fail in that determination to be realistic by which they must be inspired. They will have many and complex problems to study and solve as they endeavor to find a just balance between the legitimate interests and pride of one side and those of the other.

“But above all, the attention and imagination of our negotiators will have to be resolutely turned toward the horizons of the future. Their mission is to build a solid structure which will nonetheless be sufficiently flexible so that it can be adapted gradually as circumstances change and men serve their apprenticeships. Morocco is at once an old and a young country, where it is necessary, while maintaining venerated traditions which have stood the test of time, to go forward with the pressing demands of progress.

“For, in the last analysis, the object of these negotiations and of our common efforts is to establish an order, in which the condition of the mass of the people will be more equitable and more humane, in which the intellectual and economic development of the country can continue and become accelerated. This immense task will require technicians and investments: Morocco will thus have to continue to inspire confidence by granting full justice to all those who have put their trust in her, to all those who, on Sherifian soil, have dared, ventured and worked, and whose legitimately won rights neither of us could honorably allow to be violated.

“Such contributions will be all the more precious as they could not be inspired by any ulterior political motives, in contrast to what we see in other States where independence is painfully struggling against threats of dependence. In a world so divided, so tormented, we should establish a sort of oasis where men of diverse origins, beliefs, convictions and customs—who for all that do not look on each other as foreigners—will have the wisdom to understand each other, to become partners and to unite their efforts for their common good and for the grandeur of two closely united nations.

“It is in this firm hope that, in the name of the French Republic, I have the joy of welcoming Your Majesty on the occasion of the formal opening of the Franco-Moroccan negotiations.”

Address Delivered by His Majesty Sidi Mohammed ben Youssef, Sultan of Morocco,
at the Formal Inauguration of the Negotiations (February 15, 1956)

“Mr. President,

“It is gratifying for us to share with you this decisive moment, which will be an epoch-making one in the history of our two countries. Franco-Moroccan relations and the negotiations which are being inaugurated today will certainly be followed attentively by Moroccan and French public opinion and by world opinion as well. We owe it to ourselves, therefore, to remain faithful to the traditions of common sense, liberalism and bold creativeness which are the prerogatives of our two civilizations.

“Since the solemn Declaration of La Celle-Saint-Cloud, a new breath of freedom and progress has inspired Franco-Moroccan relations, strengthening our confidence and our faith in our common future. The Government of the French Republic recognized in that Declaration the right of our country to regain its independence, thus proving once again that the liberal principles of which France has always been the standard-bearer are still deeply rooted in the reflexes of the French people.

“As you know, Mr. President, Morocco has undergone a difficult ordeal; but, God be praised, it has remained unshakeable in its faith, confident in its destiny and prompted by the desire to gain its independence and to define the bases of a close cooperation with France, in a spirit both of innovation and political realism.

“Beginning today, the French and Moroccan negotiators will have a number of delicate problems to deal with. Their task, which we are sure they will perform with devotion and loyalty, is twofold. It consists first of all in making the independence of Morocco a tangible reality by abrogating the Treaty of Fez of 1912 and by giving the Moroccan State the possibility of fully exercising its prerogatives as a sovereign State, in conformity with our most constant aspirations. We have rejoiced in the great understanding shown by the French Government, which has been pleased to consider that the period of tutelage has now come to an end.

“The second problem is to define the bonds of interdependence that will henceforth govern Franco-Moroccan relations. The patriotic fervor of the Moroccan elite is in no way inconsistent with realism, and we should be able to reconcile the imperatives of Moroccan freedom with the requirements of a freely accepted co-operation.

“We feel that the French residents in Morocco must be given all guarantees concerning their rights, their interests and their freedoms, in short, guarantees intended to enable Frenchmen and Moroccans to live together in friendship, without derogating from the country’s sovereignty.

“Political independence is not the only predominant problem: the future of the Moroccan economy is also a great source of concern to us, for on it depend both the social progress we propose to achieve and the stability of democratic institutions in the Morocco of tomorrow. The technical, financial and economic assistance which our country expects from France will permit the rational development of its material and human resources and the expansion of a purely Moroccan economy. French patience and genius have proven their worth in our country, which enables us to look to the future with optimism and confidence.

“But there is a problem of another nature which, we hope, will very shortly be solved in terms of justice and right: the problem of our country’s territorial unity. We wish to proclaim it loudly: for us, there is no valid or acceptable freedom without the unity and integrity of our national territory.

“This unity is formally guaranteed by France and by the signatory powers of the Act of Algeciras and other international treaties. We are convinced that all friendly nations will give us the reception which our just cause deserves. We are determined to maintain with them our historical relations of friendly cooperation, and to expand these relations with due respect for their own particular interests.

“Although the future is in the hands of God, it is also what men are willing to make of it. The future which we can and want to build for ourselves presents fine prospects. An experiment in international relations is being undertaken by Morocco and France. Let us see to it that our two countries, whose sons have shed their blood on the same battlefields and for the same ideal of liberty and justice, will set the example of the solidarity and cooperation which must prevail among the peoples of the world. They will thus help to consolidate peace throughout the world after having given their nationals the assurance of a splendid future, commensurate with their genius.”

Address Delivered by Christian Pineau, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chairman of the French Delegation,
at the Opening of the Negotiations (February 22, 1956)

“Your Excellencies, Gentlemen,

“As we begin negotiations which are to define new bases for Franco-Moroccan relations, we should like, in the name of the French Republic, to pay homage to His Majesty Mohammed V. By honoring with his presence the first phase of our work, His Majesty has brought us not only the guarantee of his authority but also, we are sure, the support of the Moroccan people.

“Through him, therefore, and through His Excellency Si Bekkai and the Ministers of the Moroccan Government — whom we are happy to greet in these halls which have witnessed so many historic discussions — it is with the Moroccan nation that we are conscious of negotiating, that we want to negotiate. What, Gentlemen, is the purpose of our work? To define, as we said, new bases for Franco-Moroccan relations.

“The bonds of friendship which unite the Sherifian Empire with France, although many centuries old, were established fifty years ago, in a form which reflected international conditions and the needs of the two countries

at that time. It would be unfair to disregard the importance and greatness of the task we have accomplished together. Spurred on by a great soldier who was also a great statesman, our educators, our engineers, our industrialists and businessmen gave to a glorious empire—which needed, however, to adapt itself to modern life—a fresh impetus, of which a young Moroccan nation in full stride is now reaping the fruit.

“Need I stress the loyalties, the sacrifices which, in the course of two cruel wars, have—above and beyond temporary misunderstandings—sealed the friendship between our two peoples? France has not only given Morocco the advantages of order and progress. While our engineers were building bridges and roads and demonstrating the advantages of our technology, distinguished educators taught a people eager for human knowledge the basic concepts of our culture, without in any way interfering with the thought patterns and religious traditions of Islam. The common heritage of two peoples consists of mutual enrichment, not deprivation, confrontation, not opposition.

“We are conscious of having shared with the Moroccan people our ideal of equality and liberty, since it is in the name of this very ideal that they are asking us today to modify the basis of our collaboration. France’s pride and true greatness lies in thus guiding the peoples, whose evolution she has helped to accelerate, toward the right to control their own destinies.

“That such an evolution is sometimes effected at the price of misunderstandings or clashes resulting from impatience should not surprise us or disturb us too much. However, nationalism, which, in every country, has known times of increased violence, should not be distorted by outbursts of passion and should not sacrifice the ends to the means.

“We are grateful, in this respect, to His Majesty the Sultan and to his Government, for having affirmed that violence does not often make it easier to seek solutions, and that anarchy rarely paves the way for independence. What France can grant in the course of free negotiations, she would not regard as her duty—nor consider it to be in the interest of the peoples whose development she has promoted—to yield to agitators who are inspired by sectarianism or ambition more than by love of their own country and a liking for real freedom. But we know that His Majesty and you, Gentlemen, have chosen the right method, and the French Government is pleased at the cordial and confident atmosphere which marks the beginning of our negotiations.

“The basis of these negotiations was defined by my predecessor; it consists in promoting ‘the accession of Morocco to the status of an independent State united to France by the permanent ties of an interdependence freely accepted and defined.’ Here we come up against a gap in our dictionaries, which give a more precise definition of the word ‘independence’ than of the word ‘interdependence.’ We are convinced, however, that with mutual good will, our negotiators will have no difficulty in filling in this gap. Are we not all anxious to ensure a collaboration between our two nations founded both on confidence and efficiency?

“France intends to satisfy the national feeling voiced by the Moroccan people. A Government representing the various tendencies of public opinion has already been set up in Rabat, under the auspices of His Majesty the Sultan. This Government has been given administrative power, and we are now engaged in negotiating with it the implementation of principles which there could be no thought of ever questioning again. Knowing the sentiments that animate the Sovereign and the convictions that have always inspired his Ministers, we have no doubt that the recognition of Morocco’s independence will open the way for a whole group of institutional reforms; that the Moroccan State will be endowed with the democratic guarantees required by its new status; and that it will assure to all sections of the population respect for their rights and their legitimate interests.

“If we intend thus, at the very beginning of these negotiations, to show complete confidence in those with whom we are negotiating, it is because we are sure that they are fully conscious of the duties devolving on them, as a result of their new responsibilities, and of the necessity of maintaining an organic and durable cooperation with France. Half a century of living together has woven close bonds between our two countries, in the military, diplomatic, economic, financial, judicial and cultural fields, and has made for a solidarity which a new juridical situation could not shatter without compromising the relations between the peoples and the interests of both countries alike.

“We intend, in order to justify this reminiscence, to be guided less by the past than by the future. We know actually that no Moroccan who thinks realistically could contemplate without apprehension France’s absence from the immense task of creation and modernization that is in the process of making Morocco into one of the most civilized States of the Islamic world. Not only is our country ready to continue to give Morocco assistance in technical, cultural, economic and financial matters, but our help is also needed to maintain peace in a region of the world which is, geographically speaking, unusually important and, to this end, to share in the burdens of a security system and a diplomacy that meet identical needs.

“Thus interdependence finds its definition in the objective recognition of the common interests of our two peoples. It is up to our negotiators to establish, through freely concluded agreements, the means through which it is best to organize this interdependence and make it a living thing.

“They will also have to find formulas that will guarantee to the French residents of Morocco the right and the freedom to carry on all of their activities there, without thereby derogating from Moroccan sovereignty. We know that all Moroccans of good faith respect the courage and the enterprising spirit of which these Frenchmen have given proof, to the very great profit of the Moroccan community. They are not unaware of what a great loss to this community an exodus of the French population would mean—a population whose work still has much to contribute to the economic and cultural development of their country.

“Why conceal from ourselves the fact that the memory of recent vicissitudes and the insecurity that still reigns in certain regions are leading many Frenchmen—some of whom have been settled in Morocco for several generations—to doubt the future that awaits them as a result of the evolution of Franco-Moroccan relations? We must reassure them and, to this end, give them the certainty that their persons, their families, their property, and their interests will continue to enjoy essential guarantees. The assurances that His Majesty the Sultan, in a recent address to his people, was graciously pleased to give to the French residents of Morocco have done much to contribute to the restoration of confidence among them. It is up to our negotiators to give such promises a juridical form, on the understanding that, on a reciprocal basis, the rights and prerogatives enjoyed by Moroccans in France must be not only confirmed but extended.

“The groundwork of our negotiations having thus been laid, we should reach an agreement on the procedure for our discussions. We shall do this without difficulty, for it is not a question of drawing up together an inventory of our points of divergence, but, on the contrary, of defining our common objectives. We shall then seek the contractual formulas that will enable us to attain these objectives under the best conditions.

“If we want to come to an agreement soon, which seems advisable under the present circumstances, we shall have to bend our efforts especially toward defining broad principles, even though certain means of applying them have to be worked out in the near future. We have gained enough confidence in each other to enable us to use such a method which, we are sure, is consonant with our respective desires.

“The question might arise as to whether the nature of our discussions will not invite the intervention of other nations anxious to preserve their rights and their interests. The French Government considers that the ties which already unite us just as those which will unite France and Morocco must remain a private matter, but it does not mean to repudiate on that account the international agreements which bind those nations to either one of our two countries.

“Several of the provisions of bilateral treaties—concluded in an era when the situation of the Sherifian Empire accounted for some of the excessive privileges no longer appropriate to the present state of affairs—have been abrogated or are about to be abrogated. Others remain in force; France does not contest their validity and will take them into consideration in the new definition of her relations with Morocco. For this reason, we see nothing but advantages in informing the powers that signed these texts of the state of our negotiations.

“But it is certain that, in recognizing the independence of Morocco, France in a way assumes a moral obligation to help the latter free itself, on the international level, from certain outmoded provisions which risk impeding its evolution and thwarting its aspirations. In economic matters especially, the present regime can have certain advantages, provided it is not too one-sided. The modification, in the direction of reciprocity, of the texts which still govern the commercial relations of Morocco with the other powers will follow along the same lines of evolution as our present negotiations.

"After thanking His Majesty Mohammed V once again for the understanding he has displayed and which, we are certain, has particularly moved French public opinion and the Parliament which represents it, it remains for me to express the hope that our negotiations may soon meet with complete success. The French delegation, for its part, will spare no effort which will facilitate and hasten their progress. It is convinced that the representatives of the Moroccan Government, true to their role as pioneers of modern Islam, share its preoccupations and also wish that the tightening of the bonds of cooperation and friendship between France and Morocco, accepted in mutual agreement and strict equality, will set an example that will encourage collaboration among all peoples and promote world peace."

Address Delivered by Embarek Bekkai, President of the Moroccan Government, Chairman of the Moroccan Delegation, at the Opening of the Negotiations (February 22, 1956)

"Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister⁽¹⁾, Gentlemen,

"As we enter this active phase in Franco-Moroccan negotiations, the Government of His Majesty Mohammed V, over which I have the honor of presiding, wishes first of all to thank the President of the French Republic who has done so much to create the climate of confidence and mutual esteem in which our talks will unfold. The Government of His Majesty Mohammed V also wishes to thank the President of the Council, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Moroccan and Tunisian Affairs and Resident General Dubois, all of whom have helped to establish and strengthen this confidence and esteem.

"These sentiments, as well as the deep-rooted friendship uniting our two peoples—both equally attached to freedom and democracy, which they have defended by common sacrifices on the battlefield—are, I am convinced, the surest guarantee for the rapid and successful outcome of our negotiations. His Majesty, Mohammed V, our August Sovereign, has always been aware of this. Even during the distressing times which Morocco has just lived through, he has always manifested these sentiments in order to show us the ways of wisdom which are those of solidarity with equality, and of cooperation with freedom and dignity for all. It is with emotion that I take this solemn opportunity to thank our Sovereign for his perspicacity and his acute sense of the real interests of our people.

"The presence in France of His Majesty—who is the depositary of Moroccan sovereignty and embodies the aspirations of the Moroccan people—gives its full meaning and historical significance to the agreements which are to be drawn up and concluded freely between our two States. The Moroccan people, who have given proof of their courage and discipline, expect full sovereignty to result promptly from these agreements. Strengthened by the confidence placed in them by His Majesty the Sultan, our delegates intend to fulfill all their responsibilities. They draw their inspiration from the principles set forth by His Majesty Mohammed V in the address which he delivered before the President of the French Republic and the members of the French Government.

"Gentlemen, the independence of Morocco must be given concrete form. Thus Morocco must henceforth enjoy in the fields of defense, security and diplomacy, the prerogatives of a sovereign State. It is also as a sovereign State and on a footing of equality that Morocco will take up its talks with France, aimed at defining the exact meaning of interdependence and the terms of Franco-Moroccan cooperation, and at giving the French residents in Morocco full guarantees concerning their rights, their interests and their freedom—guarantees, in short, designed to ensure a friendly coexistence between the French and the Moroccans without derogating from the country's sovereignty.

"Besides, His Majesty the Sultan made it a point to give the French residents of Morocco the most formal assurances enabling them to face the future without anxiety or fear. Morocco will offer them a wide range in which to make full use of their vitality and experience.

(1) Alain Savary, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in charge of Moroccan and Tunisian Affairs.

"His Majesty also asserted his firm determination to lead his people toward a constitutional monarchy which will guarantee to all the exercise of the freedoms and rights laid down by the Declaration of the Rights of Man. Morocco will thus be given a democratic regime, with institutions founded on social justice and political equality.

"Gentlemen, exceptional circumstances early in this century had led to the demarcation of zones of influence in our country. Such circumstances are no longer consistent with historical factors. The independence of Morocco would be truly significant only if our country regained its territorial unity, to which the Moroccan people have been and remain unanimously and strongly attached. It goes without saying that this territorial unity has always been proclaimed by the Powers which, in the course of their relations with Morocco, have continuously guaranteed it. That is why the Moroccan Government, under the high authority of His Majesty the Sultan, intends to work for this unity and integrity, while preserving its historical relations with these Powers, in a spirit of free cooperation, equality, justice and reciprocity. We are convinced that in this field, France will not fail to help us.

"Such are the principles by which our delegation will be guided in the course of these negotiations, in order to reach the constructive solutions which are His Majesty's main concern and our own.

"The task we shall undertake will condition future relations between our two countries. We owe it to ourselves to succeed in the experiment which France and Morocco are about to carry on. We must also, in this troubled world, contribute by our example to establish harmony and consolidate peace. In doing this, both our countries will have performed their task with the conscience, the courage and the wisdom gained from their traditions and history. We are being watched by the present generations, we shall be judged by those of the future. Let us prove equal, therefore, to what they expect of us."